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# Mission, Strategic Intent, and Accomplishments and Major Challenges

## Mission

Ensure that all goods and persons entering and exiting the United States do so in accordance with all U.S. laws and regulations. The mission is based primarily on statutory authority contained in Title 19, Customs Duties, and Title 18, Crimes and Criminal Procedure, of the U.S. Code. In addition, Customs enforces hundreds of provisions contained in more than 130 other laws.

## Strategic Intent

Protect the public against violations which threaten the national economy and health and safety through targeted enforcement and informed compliance and be the national resource for information on goods and people crossing our borders.

## Significant Accomplishments for FY 1998

Customs seized just under 1.2 million pounds of narcotics, 164,000 pounds of other controlled substances, and \$368 million in cash and monetary instruments. This was due in part to Operation Brass Ring, an intensive 6-month narcotics enforcement effort, and the successful conclusion of Operation Casablanca, a 3-year investigation of money laundering by several Mexican banks. In addition, currency seizures from Customs outbound program continued to increase.

Customs also concluded Operation Cheshire Cat, a major investigation into child pornography. This investigation involved coordination with the Department of Justice and 13 foreign countries and resulted in the issuance of arrest warrants for almost 200 alleged pedophiles and child molesters.

Preliminary data for trade compliance reflects an overall compliance rate of 81 percent, holding steady with the FY 1997 adjusted final compliance rate. Compliance in air passenger processing continues to improve, from 97.6 percent in FY 1997 to 97.7 percent in FY 1998. Land border compliance remained steady at 99.9 percent. Air passenger compliance was increased while maintaining a processing rate of 5 minutes or less from baggage claim to exit for 95 percent of all 60.1 million non-precleared air passengers.

## Most Significant Challenge for FY 1999

Continuing Customs efforts to disrupt and dismantle narcotics and related money laundering organizations is the most significant challenge facing Customs in FY 1999. To do this, Customs must continue to improve its internal operations as well as work to maximize the effectiveness of all law enforcement units by cooperating with them within and outside the United States. These challenges are set forth in the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) strategic plan and the International Crime Control Strategy.

## Other Challenges include:

- ✓ Implement enforcement strategies resulting in effective interventions against willful violators;
- ✓ Strive to achieve 100 percent compliance with Customs and other agency laws;
- ✓ Form partnerships with other agencies and industry to provide world-class Customer Service;
- ✓ Maximize the use of technology to achieve mission effectiveness and resource efficiency to become an information-based agency; and
- ✓ Create a working environment that best uses and recognizes the talents of our employees.